

COCA TIMES

COIN OPERATED COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- Twisted Sisters
by John Peterson
- Peanuts from Down Under
by Bill Howard
- COCA PROFILE: Featuring Bill Howard
- Three for Ones
by Tom Gustwiller
- The Showcase Scale
by Jim & Merlyn Collings
- The Real Gem
by Roger Smith
- Chicagoland - Still the Best Game
by Sandy Lechtick
- Tales of the Hunt - Sam Mazzeo
by Jack Freund
- Chicagoland - November 2007
by Jack Kelly



COVER STORY
BY DOUG CAIN

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Message from Our President...

We elected new officers at our fall meeting to serve in 2008 and 2009. Congratulations to new V.P. Marsha Blau of Wisconsin, new Treasurer Doug Cain of Ohio, and new Recording Secretary Les Aaron of California. I will continue to have the honor of serving you as President.

My goal when I took office two years ago was to improve member benefits. Our great magazine continues to be our best asset. The annual convention continues on its successful path with our fifth one scheduled for September 11-14 in New York City. We are also making plans for conventions in 2009 and 2010 and hope to announce details soon.

One new benefit that has begun to grow roots in various parts of the country is the local gatherings. We have four scheduled for spring of 2008 in California, North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin. These mini conventions started in 2006 and have provided a great place to meet with fellow collectors. If you can't find a gathering near you, perhaps it is time for you to step up and host one. Please call me.

Our website continues to improve. Our log-on issues seem to be resolved so if you have not visited the site for a while give it a try. The classified ad section is growing, which gives you the chance to buy and sell your goods with no fees. Our discussion forum is open to members only and, while it is getting good readership, it needs more input. This is a great place to communicate with other members. We all have lots of information to share and questions that need answers. There are many other articles waiting for you (coinop-club.org).

With your help, I hope to continue making COCA a better value.

Thanks to Jackie Durham for serving the last two years as V.P., and for her very successful efforts to "spice up" our meetings. We are also grateful to Dan Davids for his many, many years as Treasurer of our club. Let your past and present officers know how much you appreciate their service when you see them.

Paul Hindin, along with Randy and Sue Razzoog, will continue with the publication duties of the COCA Times Magazine. Ken Durham will continue as chair-

man of our website committee. This great group of volunteers and everyone that steps up when asked sure makes my job easy.

We also unveiled our new COCA booth at the Chicago show in November. Our updated look and visibility should make it easier for you to offer input about our club and to find the information you need. Thanks to Ken Durham and Rich Wolfin for their donations of display materials for our booth and to Alan Sax for storing things between shows.

In conjunction with the upcoming Chicagoland show, our next meeting will be on Friday evening, April 4, 2008, at the Hilton Garden Inn. Our guest speaker will be Marshall Fey. This will be a dinner meeting; the cash bar will open at 5:30 and an Italian buffet dinner will be served from 6:00 until 6:30. This optional dinner will only cost \$10 and includes either meat or veggie lasagna, salad, bread and dessert. All members and their guests are welcome for both the dinner and/or meeting. Any donations for raffle door prizes would be greatly appreciated and should be directed to Marsha Blau. We hope to start the meeting at 6:30 and adjourn around 8:00. We have again negotiated a special COCA room rate for those that are interested in staying at the Hilton for both the spring and fall shows of \$95 single and \$98 double. Suites are available for \$159. Members should call the hotel directly at 630-584-0700 to make reservations as there are a limited number of rooms available at this rate.

We are starting a new column in this issue called restoration and display tips. Hopefully some of you will feel inspired to send in your tips for publication. Our magazine relies entirely on your submissions for its editorial content. We need your help to keep a good thing going.

Call me at 919-304-4455 if you have any questions about our club or see me at the COCA booth in Chicagoland.

Bill Petrochuk, COCA President



COIN-OP CALENDAR 2008

March 8 - 9	Victorian Casino Antiques Auction Las Vegas, NV
April 4	Spring COCA Meeting - Hilton Garden Inn St. Charles, IL
April 4 - 6	Chicagoland Show - (815) 353-1593 or (847)-244-9263
April 11 - 13	Showtime Auction Ann Arbor, MI
April 19	COCA Local Gathering, Charles Kemp (336) 626-3640 Asheboro, NC
May 2 - 4	Rich Penn Auction Des Moines, IA
May 18	COCA Local Gathering, Sandy Lechtick (818) 712-9700 Woodland Hills, CA
June 7	COCA Local Gathering, Marc & Marci Ernster (262) 675-0497 West Bend, WI
June 8	COCA Local Gathering, Dennis Green (330) 644-7361 Akron, OH
September 11 - 14	5th Annual COCA Convention, Ed Mazzola (718) 813-6806 New York, NY
November 14	Fall COCA Meeting - Hilton Garden Inn St. Charles, IL
November 14 - 16	Chicagoland Show (815) 353-1593 or (847)-244-9263

Members going to a local gathering should RSVP to the host ASAP at the phone number provided for more details. Space may be limited. The host will provide food and beverages. Please bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Please bring any machines or coin-op related items for sale or trade or show and tell.

CHARLES FEY SLOTS

by Marshall Fey

Earlier this year the Nevada State legislature voted to purchase from the Liberty Belle Collection twenty- eight slots invented and manufactured by Grandpa, Charles Fey . They have been on special exhibit in the Nevada State Museum located in Carson City since January. The exhibit will run until February 1, 2008. During this year the state plans to open a new museum on the "Strip." The Fey slots will then be moved to Las Vegas and featured there in another special exhibit.

The Fey family is pleased to know that their ancestors machines will stay together and will remain on public display in Nevada.



Charlie Fey

SUNNY BOY

By Doug Cain

Among the earliest of payout gambling machines, the countertop pocket-style slot machines were introduced in the early 1890's and remained popular well into the twentieth century. These counter machines, more commonly known as "Jacks" machines, were gradually losing their appeal when the release of several new models, beginning with the Fey Three Jacks in the mid 1920's, sparked a comeback. One of the most unusual of these new machines was the Sunny Boy. The Field Paper Products Company of Peoria, Illinois was already in the gambling business as a maker of punchboards, when in 1926 they released a small aluminum countertop machine with a very unusual theme. Un-



THE COUNTER MACHINE THAT TAKES IN THE BIG MONEY!

M-A-M-M-Y, what a go-getter little Sunny Boy turned out to be. Just a tiny little fellow but he earns the big dough with the oldest and best of them. You can't help stopping to look him over with his shiny black face, infectious smile, bright red lips and white eyes. He all but speaks and it's mighty hard to resist the chance to tap a penny in his mouth. And when you do, what an avalanche of pennies come rolling out of the jack-pot!

Just look how those pennies show off in their display windows. An entirely new idea in displaying coins. By standing them on end, they look like ten times as many as before. Fifteen or twenty pennies in a jack-pot look like a bushel basket full.

How to Play the Machine

Simple as falling off a log! Insert penny in coin chute, press down lever and penny is ready to flip around the dial into the mouth of SUNNY BOY. Of course it's not the easiest thing in the world to do but if you can make it, turn the handle on the side of the machine and out come the exposed pennies in one of the jack-pots. You can't tell which pot will dump—always a thrill to see which one comes out. Sometimes in the full one, sometimes it's the slim one—suspense is intense until the handle is turned. Of course if you're not fortunate in flipping the coin into SUNNY BOY'S mouth, the penny drops down into the exposed jack-pots or maybe into the operator's back cash box. Quite a few—yes, quite a few, fall back there. Some say almost half. But you get a ball of gum for every penny played—if you press the lever on the gum delivery but no gum is forced on you. If you fail to take the gum, only one ball is delivered the next time. The most you can get is one ball at a time.

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Solid aluminum case, brightly polished and decorated in high lustrous colors—red, yellow, black, orange, blue. Genuine Yale lock, pick-proof, theft proof. Height, 17 in.; width, 5½ in.; depth, 6½ in.; weight 9½ lbs. Gum box holds 200 balls gum. Rubber suction bumpers on base. Coins will not spill out of machine if it is turned upside down. Cheat-proof, tilt-proof, tip-proof. Jack-pots positively cannot be opened by child inserting hand, wires, etc. Adjustable pin-board. Very important! You can make it as easy or as hard to win as you want by moving a lever in the mechanism to adjust the pins. No one can do it but the operator. Overflow on jack-pots to prevent pyramiding of coins. No jamming, or clogging. Jack-pots cannot be won if pots are partially open. 1c or 5c style, same price. Unconditional Guarantee.

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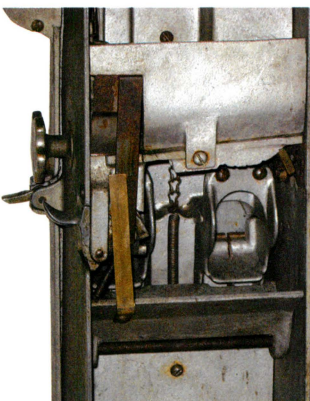
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like the more traditional looking Jacks machines being produced by other manufacturers, the Sunny Boy was designed to attract attention with its highly polished aluminum case, bright colors and infectious smile. The original advertising stated "You can't help stopping to look him over with his shiny black face, infectious smile, bright red lips and white eyes." It seems politically incorrect today, but it was an accurate reflection of the times. White men performing in blackface was common on the vaudeville stages and not considered racially offensive at the time. The inspiration for the machine may have come from

a short sound film made that same year with Al Jolson singing several of his hits in blackface. One of the most popular movies of the day, The Jazz Singer, starring Al Jolson again singing in blackface, was released the following year.

While the coin drop and Jacks machines that were manufactured prior to Sunny Boy were mostly wooden machines with castings used only where needed, this machine was designed with both a solid aluminum case and

pin-board. The Sunny Boy, which was available in either 1¢ or 5¢ version, was more complicated to operate than other Jacks machines of the day. The design combined features previously seen in Jacks machines by using a plunger to load the coin for play and dispense a gumball, a flip lever to shoot the coin onto the pin-board, and a turn-knob to release a jackpot. The combination of all those functions led to the need for a marquee with directions for playing the machine. While these were all features common to Jacks machines, Field incorporated another feature into Sunny Boy that was very unusual...the



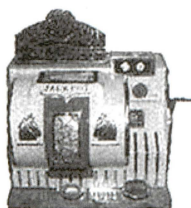
adjustable pin-board. The operator could adjust the pins to make it harder to win by opening the back door and moving a lever in the mechanism. What a great idea! Take a machine that's difficult to beat and make it tougher. It may never pay out!

After introducing Sunny Boy, the Field Paper Products Company went on to produce several additional Jacks machines. The highly successful Three Jacks, Four Jacks, and Five Jacks, as well as a new

generation of aluminum cased machines, Baby Jacks and Twin Play (a double version of the Baby Jacks), made the renamed Field Manufacturing Corporation one of the largest sellers of Jacks machines. Like the Sunny Boy, these Jacks machines were embossed with the letter F on the front casting to signify that they were made by Field. With the addition of the Keystone Puritan Bell, a 3-reel trade stimulator that was available in several models, and skill games

such as Vest Pocket Baseball and Ding The Dinger, Field expanded their line beyond the popular Jacks machines. Though Sunny Boy was a colorful, attractive machine with a provocative theme, there may not have been many produced since very few have been found to date. Why aren't there more? Was it too complicated, the theme too unusual, or was the \$19.50 price just too expensive for the time?

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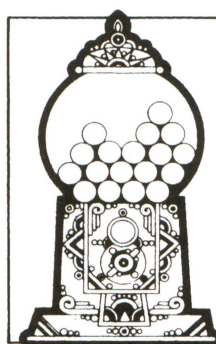
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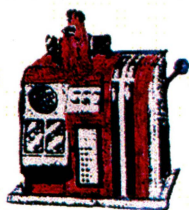
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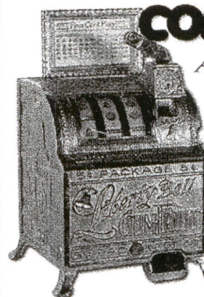
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TWISTED SISTERS

by JOHN PETERSON

My collection of coin-op is comprised primarily of British made machines. One of the many things that I like about them is the aesthetic balance their creators struck between the use of wood and metal. I also find the fairly simple construction of the games appealing. This allows me to work on them despite my modest mechanical abilities. Due to the much smaller market for these machines when compared to America, there was no economic incentive to create the manufacturing juggernauts that dominated the coin-operated industry here in the United States, companies like Mills or Jennings. A popular slot machine by an American manufacturer would be produced in the tens of thousands. A popular game by a British manufacturer would be lucky to be produced in the hundreds and there were many numbered in double digits or even less. It's all about supply and demand. Due to the much smaller population in the United Kingdom coupled with their stricter laws against games of chance, demand for games was much less than in the United States.

This held true for all the other European countries as well. To compensate for these much smaller markets, manufacturers attempted to poach on the territories of their neighbors. Some manufacturers just shipped their games to other countries and sold them through domestic agents in that country. A second category is the manufacturers who custom-made games for export, tailoring the game for the tastes of the target country. These games came ready-made to play in the coinage of the designated market with instructions written in the language of the targeted nation. Germany sold many games in Britain using this strategy. Most of these were allwins of one form or another. Some of these games made between the two World Wars had the quaint notice "Made in Saxony" in tiny, tiny print somewhere on the face of the game. The common thinking now is that the manufacturers were trying to hide the true country of origin from an English audience still stinging from recent memory of Ger-

man aggression. As you might expect, German made games are well constructed and extremely reliable performers.

Today's offering is from a third category of foreign-made games, machines that were imported to Britain and then converted by Brits for their own commercial operation or resale in England. This was most likely done by small-time jobbers or companies that acted as agents for foreign manufacturers. As with most of the British games that I see, little manufacturing identification is provided on the game itself. No original identification is definitely the norm with these games that were imported and later modified. If there is any identification, it has nothing to do with the original manufacturer and most likely relates to the resale agent or even the arcade where the game was initially placed. If Dick Bueschel were still alive and writing a book on foreign games, today's game would be in the "Mystery" section. That is because this game has been re-cased and reconfigured to increase its appeal to a more adult audience. It is only through the recent efforts of individual collectors that the true origins of this game have become known. Enough of the tease? Let's take a look at "La Girouette" or what I call "Twisted Sisters."

The master of French coin-op was Pierre Joseph Bussoz of Paris, France (1872-1958.) Having trained as a clockmaker, Bussoz switched to coin-operated games and became one of France's most successful makers of coin-op. He is best known for his wall machines, roulettes and fortune tellers. He also manufactured juke boxes. Like the giants in the American field of gambling, Bussoz had a talent for grasping the taste of the public at large and translating it into games with mass market appeal. Many of his roulettes showcased popular figures of the day. These were in addition to his other games that featured historical or mythical characters. If Bussoz were alive and well today, you can be assured that he would have a roulette game named "The Britney."



Photo A

The original Bussoz game underlying my mystery machine was named "La Girouette." (See Photo A.) Produced in 1914, Bussoz hit upon a novel idea for a new approach to the traditional roulette game. Up until then, French roulettes had spinning discs with multi-colored seg-

ments upon which to bet. You inserted your coin in one of three color-coded coin entry slots. The lever was pulled and the disc engaged. If the spinning disc stopped on your color, a pay-out was automatically made. This is similar in principle to our slot machine with the primary difference being that with a slot machine, there is no choice of specific winning color and the payout is determined by internal mechanics, unaffected by player input. Bussoz came upon a new idea. Rather than utilizing a rotating disc or reels, he created a machine with two triangular shaped drums. These two drums are set vertically, side by side, with a single picture painted across each of the mated surfaces. Each pair of surfaces is painted a different color picture for a total of three scenes. To operate the game, a coin is inserted and then the color selection is made via a dial knob at the bottom of the picture window. Using that knob, you turn a color wheel to which one of three colors you want to bet. The game is set in motion and the two drums rotate rapidly on a common gearing until one mated picture stops in view. The color of that scene determines the winner. The gearing is constructed so that the correct picture-halves will always mate when the drums stop their rotation.

"La Girouette" is a fascinating game to watch in operation. In addition, the scenes are very attractive featuring a red Mickey Mouse, a blue donkey and a green dog. Could there be anything more appealing to the masses than that? Wait a minute. Are you kidding me? A mouse and two generic barnyard animals? Ask your-

self, what is the point of these machines, anyway? Are they supposed to attract gawkers or gamblers? Let's be honest here. Who do you think were the primary players of these games back in the 1920's and 30's? Children? (If you said "yes," you were sleeping during European history, you bad boy, you!) Gambling was and continues to be the provenance of adults, specifically adult males. (It is only in more recent times that woman have joined the ranks of male gamblers. Today, females are a potent segment of the industry and casinos target and cater to the ladies. Back then, gambling was almost exclusively a male vice.) If you were to design a gambling machine targeting a male audience, what images



Photo B

would you employ to entice? If you guessed a trio of sexy women, you're right.

And so it is that my machine (See Photo B.) came into being. Once the game reached England, it underwent significant modification. If you compare it to "La Girouette," you can see that the case was changed from the fluted fruitwood case to

the more generic English oak. The original knob was also replaced in favor of this large knurled monster. It takes a manly hand to set the ladies a'spinning! The original machine had the Bussoz name on the thin strip between the painted panels. My game has "Exclusive Automatics" scripted in the same location, (See Photo C.) You will also note the color selector wheel at the bottom of the window. I have seen three other games somewhat identical to mine and two carried this name. None of my English reference books have any information on



Photo C



Photo D

example named "Pin Up Girl." It is the same game as mine but with different ladies. Its pay-out cup is the traditional French style common to many Bussoz games while mine is the style more common to British machines. All these conversion games take the large British penny and they automatically pay out two pennies if you select the winning lady.

Photo E is the mechanism. On the whole, French games were more sophisticated than their British or German counter-parts and this game is no exception. One very clever device is the small button immediately under the coin entry. Aware of it for years, I have puzzled over its function. Try as I may, I could not figure out what this little button did besides bug the devil out of me. To my amazement, the mystery was recently solved by collector extraordinaire, Bob Klepner of Australia. Here is what Bob told me. The bet is made by way of selecting the hoped-for winning color using the knob at the bottom of the window. What would prevent a player from selecting a color, playing and losing the game, and then moving the color betting knob afterward to the winning

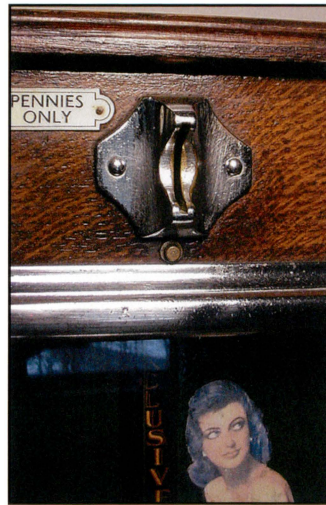


Photo E

this company, if such a company by that name truly existed.

The major difference, of course, is the pictures on the panels. Goodbye Mickey and the farmyard friends; hello Lola and the sisters of sizzle! Each of the panels is hand-painted a distinct woman on a different colored background. Photo D is another British

color and claiming that the machine had not paid out correctly? Not so fast there, Cheater-boy; this machine is smarter than you think. After a game has been played, pushing that small knob under the coin-entry will reset the color-betting wheel to the color originally selected. Score: Owner 1, Cheater 0. What a terrific machine.

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. While I do not doubt that as true, the more important marketing slogan is: Sex Sells. Some clever entrepreneurs in England in the later '20's or early 30's saw the opportunity to take a unique but staid French game and jazz it up with some sexy female pictures. The result is a memorable game that retains as much appeal today as it did when the sisters took their first twirl. Viva la difference!

THE END

Postscript: If you would like put your own twist on today's story or just talk about European coin-op, drop me a line at jp4@charter.net. Next time, we'll take a closer look at some games that came out around the World Wars. Stay tuned.

Exterior Restoration

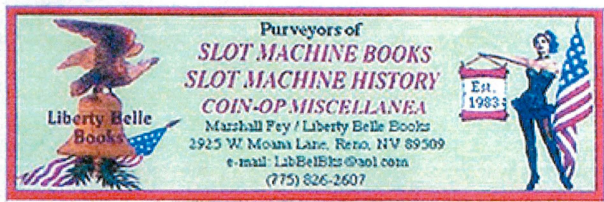
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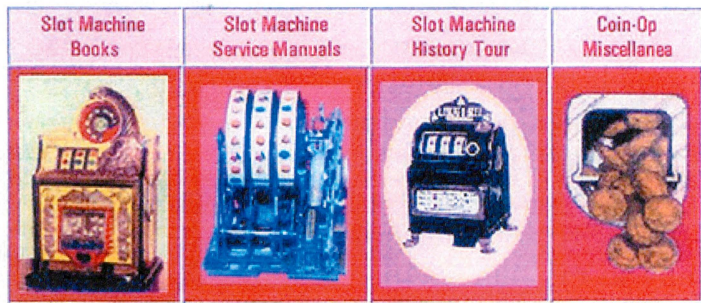
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This is especially useful in the for sale section because
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PEANUTS FROM DOWN UNDER

By Bill Howard



The Nobby Peanut Machine is one of those vending machines that either “grabs” you or it doesn’t. It is an extremely rare, large aluminum vender from Australia that found its way to the U.S. thanks principally to the efforts of the late Bill Enes. Manufactured in Australia in the 1920’s, it caught Bill’s eye, resulting in Bill bringing somewhere between 5 to 10 examples from the land of down under. It works on an English penny and features a lovable monkey filigree mounted atop a large globe. The machine is quite ornate and stands almost four feet tall and is supported by four large claw feet. It also features a large tray underneath the machine to catch the nuts and a background of embossed nuts. Because of its composition, most all examples that I have seen either have new globes or repairs to the feet and tray.

I was introduced to this machine when I visited good friend Chad Boekelheide in Northville, South Dakota. Much to my regret, he told me he would never sell his example, so that was that.

Over the next few years I ran across a couple Nobbys in other collections that were not in as good as shape. These collectors also were not willing to part with their Nobby. But I continued to fascinate over the “look” and ornateness of this vending machine.

The next part of this story takes us to the fall 2006 Chicagoland show where I noticed the Nobby pictured here in the booth of Bob and Loretta Kretchko of New Milford, Connecticut. They set up at the Atlantic City shows as well as Chicagoland, and it is always a pleasure to visit their booth. I then discovered that this was the very example Chad once owned, and still in great, all original shape.

In talking to Bob and Loretta, they suggested that I try the machine and put an English penny in my hand. When I pulled the lever on the right side of the machine, not only did peanuts come out, but also the paper picture at the top window of the machine was replaced by another picture. What is this? Bob explained that, after he got the machine, he noticed that chains than ran internally up the back of the machine behind the globe from the coin entry to the top were unhooked. When he hooked them up and adjusted them, he discovered that this machine that he admired and had originally intended to keep to himself was, not only a vender, but also a merchandise advertiser. I discovered later that this feature had also escaped Chad, who knows an awful lot about vending.

I had never had a machine with such a feature in my collection, so things started to get serious. I think this added feature enhances the value and desirability of a machine greatly.

Thanks to an accommodation from Bob and Loretta, I was able to overcome a temporary state of financial embarrassment and acquired my Nobby when they delivered it to me in the Spring 2007 Atlantic City Show, where it even managed to get my partner “B.P.” Peirce excited. And frankly, old “B.P.” doesn’t get excited that often.

Again, for those of us moved by the “look” of a wonderfully ornate machine, the Nobby is something special and also, as has been said many times, the fun in the hunt, and the hunt in Chicagoland still bears fruit.

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COCA PROFILE

Bill Howard



When did you first start to collect?

About 1985

What was your first purchase? How did you get interested in Coin-Op? Did another collector influence you?

A beat up Victor gumball machine at Carlisle Car Show from a man living in an old bus that read "love Jesus, not the Courts" as he attempted to evade legal efforts to pay spousal support. Then I ran into John T. Johnston there who sold me my first real machine, a Try It Baby dice trade stimulator in perfect condition. He would not accept my check. Eventually, I came to guard his booth at night at the fairgrounds while he slept in the comfort of a Holiday Inn. Then I met Charlie Meeks who told me about a strange, enjoyable guy in Westlake, Ohio that he thought I should meet. Mike Gorski, the Godfather, became my mentor and, as they say, I guess that's how the story began.

What kind of machines do you collect?

All categories; those that are rare, appealing to the eye, enjoyable to play and demonstrate their creator's effort to get your attention.

How many machines do you have?

Do you collect things other than coin-op?

I have near 300 items in my collection – either art or attention getter in the form of automata, noddies, advertising items, clock work and electric window displays, bronze, pictures and

trade stimulator and slot coin machines. My personal collection is pretty well set in terms of money and space. I still try to improve and occasionally "deal" with other friends and collectors. My hope is to never have to liquidate my collection and the things that my wife and I have come to love.

What was your best find?

My Aerobasketball Arcade Machine and my French Clown going up the pole. The personal satisfaction in preserving these one of a kind original pieces, as well as the financial reward, still brings a smile to me.

What was your worst purchase or experience?

The worst buy was my purchase from Tom Gustwiller of the mystery machine in Enes' book that turned out to be an E. E. Jr. prototype for \$2500. This machine was bad. After using restraint in not just throwing it out the window, I was saved finally when a dealer gave me \$500 for it years later. So, you can't win them all.

Are your machines mostly for show or play?

All are for both. All work and are played.

Are your machines displayed throughout the house or in a special area?

Anyone who has been to our house knows the answer to that one. Thanks to the love and patience of my wife, the only functional things in our house are the toilets, bed, TV and kitchen table. The good news is, as I have often pointed out to my wife, the loveable characters in our home do not soil the carpet, need to be fed, yell, scream or create other forms of discord, and are still fun to have around.

Does your spouse like coin-op?

My wife does have things in the collection and enjoys her favorites. But she is upset that we do not have room for the sweeper.

Do you prefer machines in all-original condition or fully restored?

Original, if possible.

How do you feel about replica or reproduction machines?

I feel both types have their place. Those that reproduce common things just to make money and confuse people should be shunned. But someone who's talent at replicating something that is a clear replication that is then accessible and affordable to collectors who would otherwise never be able to appreciate or get near one provide a great service to the hobby and should be encouraged.

Do you refurbish/fix your own machines?

I can “service” some things in our collection, but do not have the talent to repair or restore most. I have been fortunate to know those that do. The Godfather and “Smiley,” Dubina of Elyria, Ohio, have been most helpful. For some time I have used Ross Misner of Akron, Ohio, my friend and the repairer/restorer of my collection.

Where do you purchase most of the items you buy?

At shows or at collector’s houses.

Do you actively search out machines from other collectors?

Yes

Do you use or avoid auctions, Ebay, or other places? Why?

It has become harder and harder to find the items I seek in local auctions or antique malls. I much prefer shows and conventions where I can see an item personally, examine it personally, and enjoy the company of my fellow collectors and friends at the same time.

How did you become knowledgeable?

What advice do you have for new collectors?

Collecting has become more expensive. I discovered that I did not have the money for trial and error. The Godfather encouraged me to go to libraries and other sources of knowledge before buying things – even those he had for sale. I attempted to learn from those friends I could trust who knew much more than I did.

I believe “learning experiences” should be left for those that can afford them – I can’t. As far as advice to others I have written a book that will be available soon that tries to give advice to others as to collecting in general and in specific reference to each of the categories in our collection. I hope it is as much of a help as it was when I got advice from my friends.

Do you sell machines?

I am a collector and do not sell machines as such, other than to facilitate my collecting. I search by shows, friendship and reputation.

What advice do you have for auction goers?

As far as advice for auctions, NEVER participate unless you know where the item came from, have seen it and have watched it operate or have had a confidant there to do it for you, and set a limit before you start bidding. As for the auctioneer, he may be pleasant, civilized or even professional – but he is there to take your money.

Do you buy on Ebay?

No. I believe Ebay is for the accumulator, not the collector.

What is your forecast for the future of Coin Op?

I think the future depends on whether the Club and the hobby can continue to generate public interest necessary for people to understand how wonderful these machines are and were. I used to collect cars and found out that by and large the value of old cars rose and declined as people who could buy them fell in and out of relating to them. I can relate to a corvette, but not to a Model T. We cannot allow our collection pieces to become “Model T’s.” We must do all we can to continue through clubs and fraternal efforts to expose the young and old in the form of new members to just how great these machines really are.

What categories of coin-op do you think will appreciate the most?

For the logic above, I think arcade and slots will continue to do better as time goes by than vending and trade stimulators, because they, in general, are easier for novices to understand.

Have you thought about how or if you will dispose of your collection as you get older, and not with it anymore?

I hope when the sad day comes it will be in a national auction or other such arena setting and that enough people would show up so the food doesn’t get cold.

What do you like best about collecting coin-op?

The friends I have accumulated, my collection, and the memories. I am proud of helping Frank DeMayo set up C.O.C.A. and in helping others organize the conventions we now enjoy. And I guess it makes me feel good that the efforts to resave or restore some of the rarer things in our collection have helped preserve our heritage a little bit.

Postscript:

Shortly after Bill Howard completed this profile, he wrote and published a book entitled: “Every Picture Tells A Story” that shows and discusses his collection.

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THREE FOR ONES

by Tom Gustwiller

Three for ones were the cats pajamas back in the 1890's, and are the oldest surviving form of automatic payout machines. The problem is most collectors don't know what I'm talking about when



(a) Lightton

I mention them. One of the first examples of the 3 for 1 was called the Lightton 3 for 1. (a) It was made of cast iron and the patron could light his cigar with the wick on top. It has a patent date of December 20th 1892. After dropping the nickel, it could go three ways. Either in the back cash box, the bottom of the front, or it would trip a lever that released

two nickels plus the one played for a three coin payout. It was advertised for sale in the B.A. Stevens catalog of Toledo, Ohio in the fall of 1893. This saloon catalog was full of bar supplies from pool tables, decks of cards, to beer taps. The Lightton was advertised as No. 4 Slot Machine and sold for \$15.00.

Another example of the three for one was the Non Pareil Novelty Co. Machine also made by Jones Novelty with almost the same mechanism but a wood case. (b) The nickel could go two ways in this machine with the winning nickel giving a three coin payout also.



(b) Automatic Slot

The Automatic Slot 3 for 1 was made in Binghamton, New York City. In this machine the nickel bounces down over a series of spring wires and either disappears into the cash box or stops behind one of the three circular gold guild simulated jackpot windows. When that happens the machine pays out three nickels. Recently some of the glass only has been on e-bay but no machines.

According to Dick Bueschel the machine was made by the Bundy Time Recording Co. in Binghamton who ultimately turned into the IBM company.

The Maley Acme (c) was made by Charles T Maley in Cincinnati, Ohio along with many other early trade stimulators. This machine added a new feature, a visible "Jackpot" of nickels on a sliding track. These were the nickels payed out and the player could see them. The plate at the top says "Drop a Nickel in Slot? If it Goes to the Right? You win 15 Cents. Some of the players would give the nickel a spin to the right and it helped their chances of winning.



(c) Maley Acme

Two other versions were made by Davis Novelty of Elmira, NY. In the first example you drop the nickel and it goes thru the pegs and if you hit the center jackpot hole you can turn the crank and get your three nickel payout. (d) The other example made by Davis Novelty (e) has a wheel that the nickel turns when you play it. If the nickel goes the right direction you win three nickels from the visible jackpot window.



(d)

This last example pays out three nickels and has a brass playfield. Most of the nickels played can be seen so the operator can see if there are slugs.

It was made by Oliver Novelty in Elmira, N.Y.



Davis or Oliver must of copied each other. About 1895-1896 the one wheelers like the Owl started to come out, and were much more fun to play, so these old three for ones disappeared. The three for ones are wonderful machines, and are an important part of the evolution of the slot machine.

(e)

THE SHOWCASE SCALE

(circa 1909)

by Jim & Merlyn Collings



Photo 1

column” and a “lampost column”, culminated with the SHOWCASE SCALE or Silent Salesman. It is said people were dazzled by the creation of such a scale. As far as we know there are 3 variations of the SHOWCASE SCALE.

A large version of the SHOWCASE SCALE (possibly 2 known) was invented in 1909 (photo 2). This large Showcase Scale is 74” tall x 34” wide x 33” deep. The scale is painted cast iron with brass-plated trim. The scale has 5 shelves which are

The SHOWCASE SCALE, also known as the Silent Salesman, is extremely rare and uniquely different. (photo 1, courtesy of Ken Rubin) Very few of these oddball scales have survived. The scale patents were applied for in 1903, 1908, & 1909 by the North American Scale Co. located in Boston, Mass.

The success of the early National Scales motivated other scale designers to “jump on the bandwagon” as well. Fredrick Verplast became the principal founder of the National American Scale Co., creating several scale designs from 1902-1908. By 1909 his experimental designs with a “round

visible on all sides. The dial face is shaped like a mantle clock with glass storage space on each side of the dial. The base is made of sturdy cast iron having a brass footplate which reads: THE NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO. The glass shelves are ideal for displaying jewelry, perfumes, sale items, watches and clocks and other commercial items.

For the collector or for personal use: small vending machines, antique advertising, dolls, photographs, movie memorabilia and other items can be displayed. This wonderful scale was probably used in drug stores, department stores, hardware stores, and any other indoor high-traffic areas. This scale certainly deserves the nickname “Silent Salesman.”

Photo 1 is the 2nd variation of the SHOWCASE SCALE owned by Ken Rubin. Ken has his Coney Island glass souvenir collection displayed in this fantastic scale. The scale is smaller than the one previously described. It has a wooden back door with a mirror framed in wood. The sides are cast iron, framed in wood. The scale dimensions are: 74” high x 22” wide, 34” deep.

Above the dial is a cast iron marquee which reads: ONE CENT POSITIVE WEIGHT. Under the word CENT is the coin entry. Embossed on the footplate is: NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO. The scale has 5 shelves which are held by brass brackets.

When Ken Rubin purchased this SHOWCASE SCALE from the Mahopac Farm Auction in October 1997 it wasn’t working. He dis-

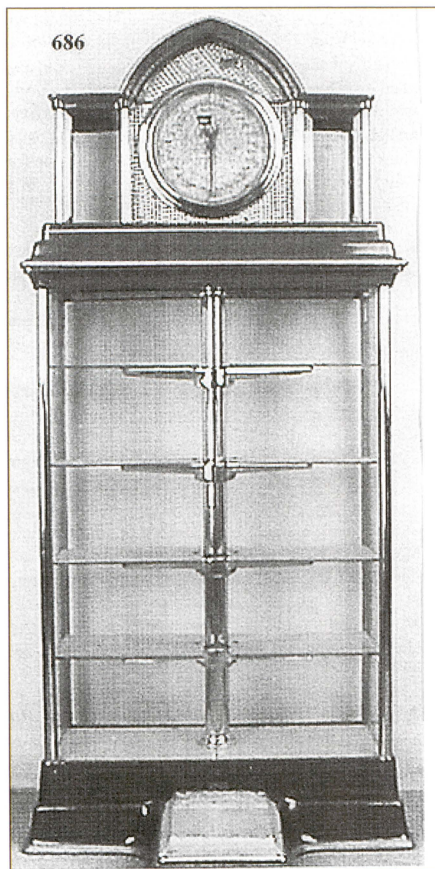


Photo 2

Photo 3





Photo 4

covered it wasn't working because it was jammed with 1,064 pennies, of which 115 were early "wheat" cents! After removing the pennies the scale worked like a charm.

Included here is an incomplete 2nd version of the SHOWCASE SCALE from Jeff Storck's collection, (photo 3). This scale is missing the dial face, needle, shelves and shelf brackets; however the mechanism is there. Jeff is anxious to restore this rare piece.

The 3rd version of the SHOWCASE SCALE has a cast iron frame, rather than a wood frame, and is also owned by Jeff Storck, (photo 4). This scale is probably the only one known. Unlike the other version, it has a rounded top, without a marquee, that resembles a

Grandfather Clock. The back of the scale has a glass back door framed with wood, which gives easy access for putting in and taking out of display items. The spring mechanism is located behind the dial and written on the dial it says: AMERICAN SCALE CO. (photo 5).

The NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO. and its sister company, AMERICAN SCALE CO. were located in Boston, Mass. in the same building. It seems quite likely that NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO. became the AMER-

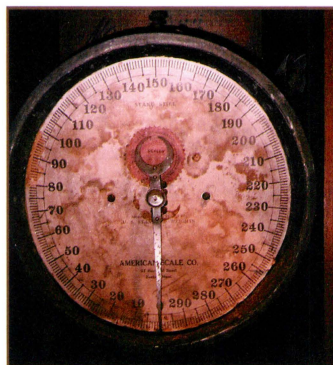


Photo 5

I C A N SCALE CO. around 1910, when this version was produced.

Also, located behind the dial is a quart-size coin bucket that collects deposited cents. The coin entry is located above the dial at the 2:00 o'clock position. Notice in (photo



Photo 6

6) that the platform rod is enclosed in a special tube that feeds into the yoke portion located behind the dial and needle connecting the mechanism with the lower platform. This tube is stabilized at each end by a steel plate. Each of the 5 shelves come in 2 sections which are held together by brass clips and brackets. The shelves are adjustable and can be raised or lowered to accommodate different sized items. The middle of each shelf has a half-moon cut that allows the platform rod and tube to move without hitting the glass shelves. The footplate reads: SILENT SALESMAN.

We would like to thank Ken Rubin and Jeff Storck for their invaluable input.

This unique and exciting "Silent Salesman" would highlight any coin-op collection.

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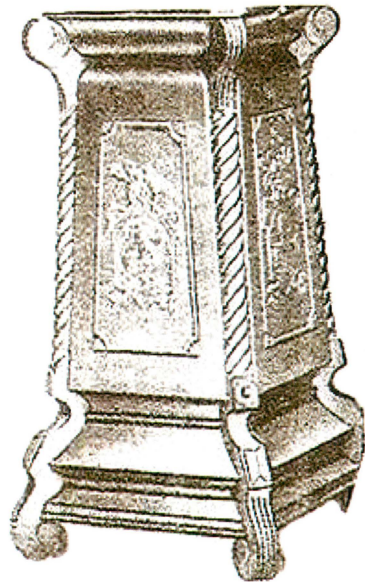
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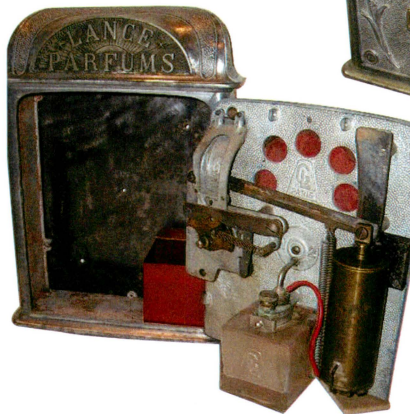
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VERY UNUSUAL



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German 2-column Cast Iron
Chocolate Vender,
Dog in Forest has Glass Eyes,
Porcelain Flavor and Instruction Signs,
Maker Unknown.



LANCE PARFUMS
French Wall Mount
Perfume Vender, Circa 1920,
Made of Cast Aluminum with
Decorative Brass Trim Pieces.

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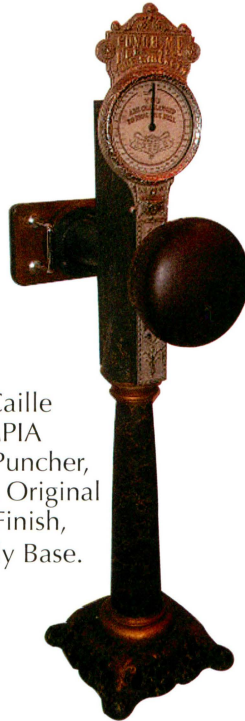
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Caille Bros. Cast Iron
1 cent BASEBALL and
French Market LA COMETE
Token Pay-Out, Circa 1911
Note: Same Early
4-Legged Base on Each.



1905 Caille
OLYMPIA
Cast Iron Puncher,
Restored to Original
Marble Finish,
Note: Early Base.



Caille LA CAILLE Cast Iron
Token Pay-Out One Wheel
Gaming, Highly Scrolled
and With Detail of Birds.



Caille BUSY BEE
Original Roman Gold
Finish on Early Scalloped
Swivel Base - an Early
Cast Iron Saloon Trade
Stimulator, Circa 1901.



Caille CAST Iron
MYSTIC WHEELS
Two Versions
Were Made,
One for Men and
One for Women
Penny Arcade
Paint Soon to
Be Restored to
Marble Finish.



Caille Cast Iron
SUCCESS
5 cent Poker
Trade Stimulator
Smaller Version
Restored to Original
Marble Finish.



Caille SIMPLEX
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Caille JUMBO SUCCESS
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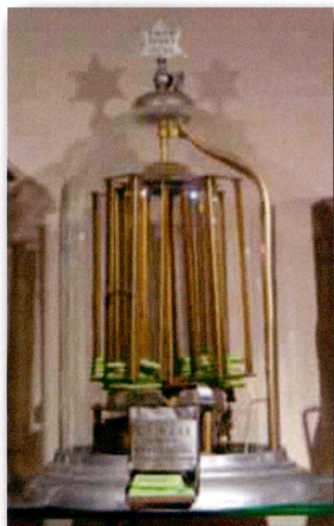
The Real Gem



Roger Smith

The story of the Buffalo vendor and its maker

Collectors of coin-operated devices all have their favorite machines – the ‘gems’ of their (or anyone else’s) collection. There is one vendor that might be on a lot of people’s list that can truly lay claim to that title because of its little known original name and a short-lived company on the south side of Chicago that made some of the most desirable machines that exist today.



For those who have been fortunate enough to see one in person, the ‘gem of the collection,’ the owner’s prized machine, or the observer’s secret lust is often a glass-dome vendor. One of the largest of the glass-dome machines to have survived until

today is the Buffalo vendor. These ma-

chines are notable for their size (over 14” high) and their noisy, sometimes finicky, clockwork motors that rotate the four columns of gum when a penny is dropped through the top. When found with other labels (Somerville, or the even rarer LE West), these variants carry the claim of “patents allowed.” With apparent origins as far apart as London, Ontario and Rockford, Illinois (for the Somerville’s and LE West, respectively) where did the Buffalo come from and who really did have the patents? The answer is the White Vending Company of Chicago, Illinois.

The R.J. White Vending Company

The story of the White Vending Company begins around the turn of the last century in what would become Chicago Ridge, Illinois. Much of the early history is murky, but documents indicate that the White Company existed as early as 1897, as makers of gas fixtures and plumbing supplies.

There has been speculation that in 1901, the Ripley J. White Manufacturing Company had entered into some sort of agreement with the Paul E. Berger Company to produce some or all of their slot machines. The White Company would continue to produce their own versions of the American Beauty (regular and musical versions), the Chicago Ridge and the Oom-Paul. There is also conjecture about White's production of the Berger Dewey (1901-1904). Despite this, statements made by White in 1906 seem to suggest that there was no relationship with Berger until the spring of 1902 when White came to the aid of the ailing Berger Company.

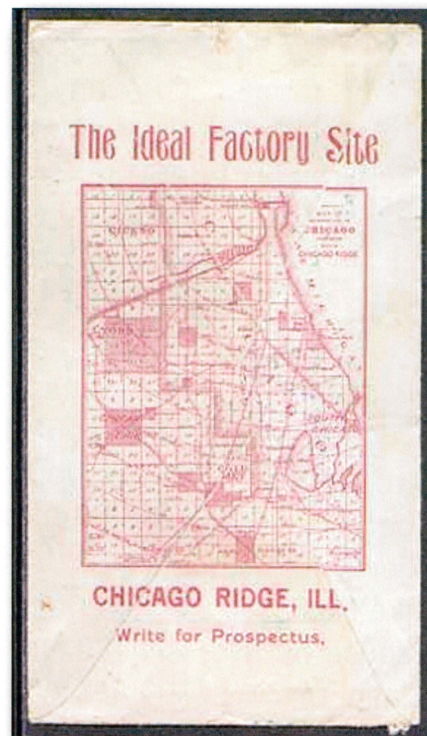
With the collapse of the electric slot machine market in 1901 and 1902, the Berger Manufacturing Company got

into serious financial trouble and on April 23rd, 1902, an involuntary petition of bankruptcy was filed against the company. The company also failed to file the required annual report with the state and their charter was temporarily revoked in July of 1902. It is at this point we know that the paths of Ripley J. White and Paul E. Berger crossed and eventually became very entangled...



Paul Berger's success had resulting in rapid expansion and the company becoming overextended. (In 1901, Berger himself had even patented pneumatic tires and an improved suspension system for 'motor

vehicles' and the company owned patents on a rotary steam engine and an electric farm tractor.) The company was asset rich but cash poor, resulting in the bankruptcy. He had a mortgage on the company property for \$16,000 (the equivalent of just under \$375,000 today), held by the First National Bank of Chicago. In addition, creditors had claims of about \$30,000 (over \$700,000 today) against both the company and Berger personally. A public notification about the Berger bankruptcy was published in the newspaper and White, having experience in the manufacturing business,



traveled to Chicago Ridge for the purpose of inspecting Berger's property holdings and the business.

Paul Berger told White that he was looking for someone who would buy the assets of the company and enough of his own personal assets that he could liquidate his indebtedness and keep his homestead, which was actually located on the plant property. Berger hoped to be able to repurchase the plant and assets again at some point after the sale. A deal was struck and White paid Berger \$10,000 (at least \$3,500 of which was for personal property that Berger held) and agreed to buy the business from the bankruptcy receivers, the Equitable Trust Company and Henry L Wilson, trustee, for the sum of \$8,500. On May 17th the deal was signed and on July 3rd the deeds were transferred to White by the bankruptcy trustee and recorded in the County Recorder's office. As a part of this agreement, White agreed to hire Berger as a foreman for the salary of \$40 per week (\$935 today) and included a provision that Berger could repurchase the company if he could come up with \$28,500 to repay the various loans and expenses by September 15th of that year. In today's business terms, White was the Berger Manufacturing Company's "White knight."

Trouble brewing

Despite Berger's frequent absences from his duties at the plant while trying to secure financial banking, the September deadline loomed without signs that Berger would be able to make the payment to take the company back. Whether it was because of this looming failure, a personality clash, or



Chicago Municipal Court Building, 1907

Chicago Daily News negatives collection, DN-0005041. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.

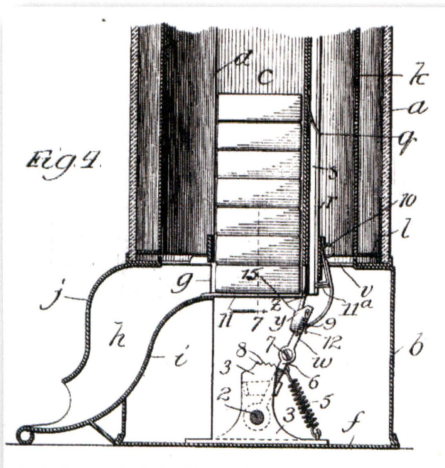
something else, on September 13th, 1902, Paul Berger and "Paul E Berger Manufacturing Company, a Corporation" filed suit against R. J. White (and others). The suit alleged, among other things, that despite the free and clear title White had obtained, the transfer of ownership was really just a loan and that White was not free to run the company, make money or sell off some of the assets. Despite the suit, on July 23, 1903, R.J. White filed papers with the Secretary of State for Illinois forming the R.J. White Company.

Legal motions went back and forth on the Berger case until at least 1907, but during this period the R.J. White Company produced a staggering array of slot machines, though most were cheap copies of con-



temporary machines made by other companies. One of its advertisements from this time boasted 70 models. If this claim were true, it would have made the R.J. White Company even larger than Mills or Caille at the time. White slot machines of this period were notable for their ornate crank (play) handles and decals of glamorous women that adorned the fronts of most of the machines. The interior was generally rubber stamped with the company's name. Models made by the R.J. White Company were often named after cities and places such as the Chicago, the Chicago Ridge, the Missouri, the Oshkosh, the Kalamazoo, and the Monaduock.

In the meantime, Paul Berger patented a match or gum vender (No. 822,909, June 12, 1906) that appears very like the later National Vender, made in 1907, that is often found selling Colgan's Taffy Tolu gum or Wilber's Chocolates. (The actual machine that was eventually produced



was patented by Charles Thomas Frantz on February 16, 1907, as number 844,509, and assigned to the National Vending Machine Company of Maine. Despite the similarity, it is probable that there was no connection between the two.) On February 24, 1909, Paul E. Berger put his signature on the official papers dissolving the company for the final time and the Secretary of State (for Illinois) made it official

March 16th, 1910. In 1926, the Clerk of the Superior Court of Cook County sent the Secretary of State notice that a court action decreeing the Paul E. Berger Manufacturing Company dissolved had been entered April 10th of that year. (The reason for the 15-plus year delay between these last two dates is unknown, but it may represent the time necessary for the company to go through receivership.)

The White Vending Co. begins

That is all well and good, but what about the White Vending Company and the Buffalo vendor? In March of 1906, the R.J. White Company filed its last annual report with the State of Illinois. (A result of some of the legal actions going on in the Berger suit?) Initially to be named the Enterprise Vending Company, the White Vending Company was incorporated in the State of Illinois on June 3, 1907, with Ripley J White, James F. Hutchison and Albert N. Lange as the first officers. (White served as president and Treasurer and Lange served as secretary; the role of Hutchison is unclear, but he was granted one of the 100, \$100 shares in the company – Lange was given 35 and White retained 64 for himself.) We know that White was no stranger to vending, because an advertisement for the White Manufacturing Company shows them selling the Berger peanut ven-

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Just to get started right we will sell you this perfect-acting \$10.00 Automatic Vending Machine for \$6.00

It sells Peanuts or Candies (which we sell cheaper than any one, or you can buy them anywhere). Can be used on counter inside or on iron stand outside.

Those in use are paying owners 300 per cent per annum on investment. We make a large line of Coin Operating Machines. Also Gas and Gasoline Lighting Devices, Lamps, etc., etc. Get our Catalogue.

BUY DIRECT FROM THE FACTORY

WHITE MFG. CO., Chicago Ridge, Illinois

dor. (For more on this vendor, see the C.O.C.A Times 7(1):12-16, 2006.) As a part of the initial corporate filing for the new company, White submitted an inventory of the assets of the company. It is here that we find the connection to the “Gem” vendor.

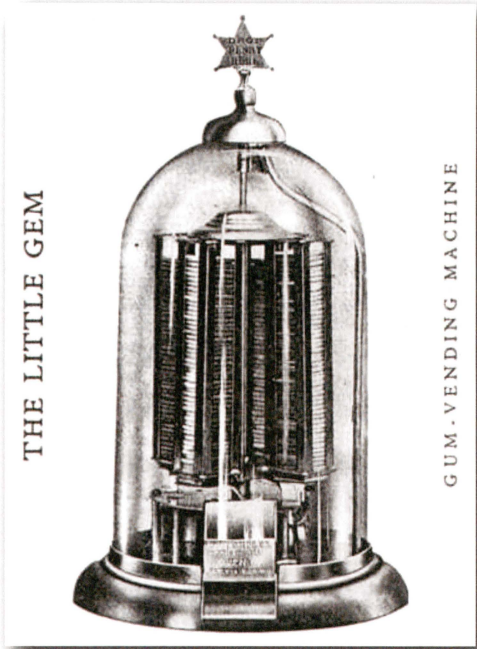
The inventory submitted gives a glimpse of the newly formed company. In addition to a Wilton rug, a walnut desk, 5 office chairs, a step ladder and other miscellaneous office trappings, we find a very different picture of the company than the manufacturing empire inherited from Berger. The inventory lists a (small) number of scales (Wilton), music boxes (Regina and others), grip and strength testers, punching bags and other amusements. There are entries for 55 hot peanut vending machines (The Enterprise), 6 “Puritan

Machines”, 40 “Automatic Baile Peanut Machines” (valued at \$2.00 each) and others. It is on the second page that we finally find the following entries:

100	Aluminum bases Gem Machines	70.00
100	Gum machines Buffalo style	700.00
143	Gum machines (White) 6.00	863.00
3	White Star Gum machines	15.00
560	Globes for Gem machines .20	112.00
677	Globes for Gem machines .10	67.70
52	Little Gem Gum Machines 8.00	416.00
75	Gum movements & bases 3.50	262.50

The Gem and Buffalo machines appear to be the core of the business, but is this the

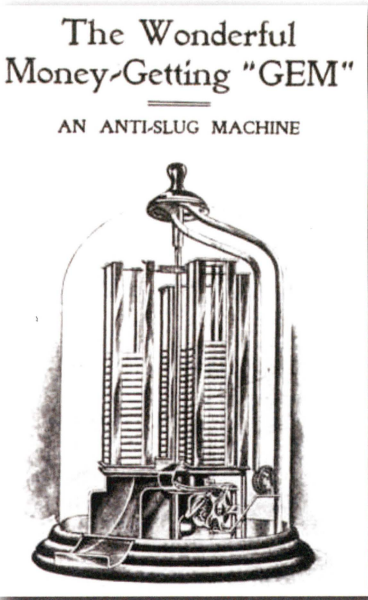
Buffalo we know and what was the “Gem” machine? Advertising from the company gives the answer: Yes and no.



Surviving advertisements by the White Vending Company consistently refer to what we know as the Buffalo as “The Little Gem” or simply the “Gem” machine. The ads tout “For beauty of design and attrac-

tiveness this Gum Machine (for indoor use) is very popular and it catches the nimble pennies like flies. Has solid aluminum base, with mechanism of brass and steel enclosed in a beautiful, heavy crystal glass globe, through which the gum and mechanism can plainly be seen. A penny dropped into it unfailingly operates the mechanism, and the automatic rotary motion of the device has great attraction for little folks. Many a penny is dropped into the slot just to ‘see the wheels go round.’

Guaranteed sanitary and every machine in perfect working order.” Because the



weight is variously listed as 15 or 25 pounds boxed, the question must be raised of the possibility of a steel-based version, but this could just as easily be simple inaccuracy in the advertising. It is interesting to note that the machine shown as the “Little Gem” has the metal dome at the center of the main shaft. This dome is found in most, if not all, of the existing machines, but is not shown in the machine labeled simply “gem.” No matter what, it is clear however, that the real name for this machine was the “Gem.”

The Birth of the Gem

Filed on August 1st, 1903, by Claude Bigelow, the patent for the Buffalo vendor was granted on June 4th, 1907, and assigned to Ripley J. White, just one day after the State of Illinois granted the corporate charter for

*Inventor:
Claude Bigelow*

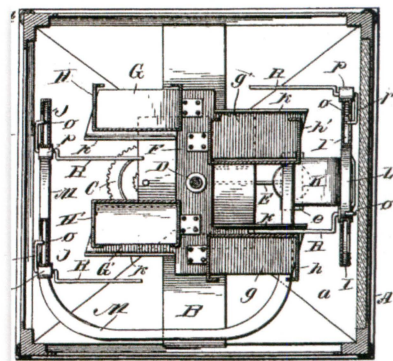
the White Vending Company. (Claude Bigelow and White had a working relationship that dated back to the formation of the R.J. White Company

when he was listed as the secretary of the new company on the original papers of incorporation.) The machine shown in this patent (patent # 856,019) looks like a Buffalo, but the case it is shown with

(and described in the patent application) was square. This is the White Star Vendor known from advertising that has survived. Despite this cosmetic difference, the mechanism is clearly that of a Buffalo.

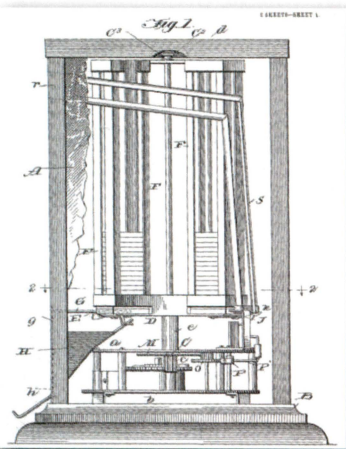
It is interesting that before this, on June 1, 1903, Bigelow filed a patent for a four-column vendor that looks like a clear forerunner of the Buffalo, but is not.

This patent (granted October 4, 1904, Pat# 771,294) and assigned to John C. Curtis of Chicago, has the clockwork motor on the



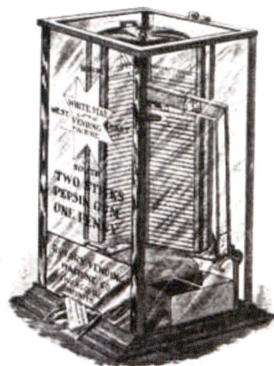
bottom and either three or four columns to contain the product, but the similarity ends there. This patent was for a machine that would vend three or four different products at the same time using a matching number of coin slots so the user could choose the product they wanted. In this machine the

coin would trip a level on its way to the central (single) clockwork motor. This level would act as the sweep to slide the product off the bottom stack when the motor rotated the assembly. The device seems impractically complicated with four coin slots, four locations where the product would fall (before exiting at a common point) and would have suffered from the fact that at each use the products would be in a different position. This would mean that



WHITE STAR GUM VENDOR

“WORKS WHILE YOU SLEEP”



OPEN AND ABOVE BOARD SALESMAN
AN ORNAMENT TO ANY STORE

the patron would have to be careful to select the appropriate coin slot because it would differ each time. The interesting thing in this patent is the observation that Bigelow himself recognized that this same principle could be applied to a device that would vend the same product from all columns and would use a much simpler mechanism and a single coin slot – the White Star machine and eventually the Gem/Buffalo.

It is possible, if not probable, that it is not the same “White Star” gum machine listed in the first inventory of the company. An early advertisement from White shows a private label version of the classic “Climax Chicago” which carries the “White Star” name. It is clear that both the square Buffalo-style and the Chicago private label were advertised by the



company. It is equally probable that if the company held the patent on “the Gem” it would more aggressively market, make and have on hand more of these machines. It is likely that we will never know for sure.

The inventory also leaves us unclear on several other aspects of the machine we know as the “Buffalo.” If the “Gem” was the standard, what were the 100 “gum machines, Buffalo style” listed on the inventory? We also

can’t be sure of the total number of machines made or even on hand when the company was formed. Was it the 52 machines on hand, 152 including the bases on hand, or should we include the 560 or 677 globes on hand? How many could have been made in later years? No matter how many were made, few have survived.

The fate of the company

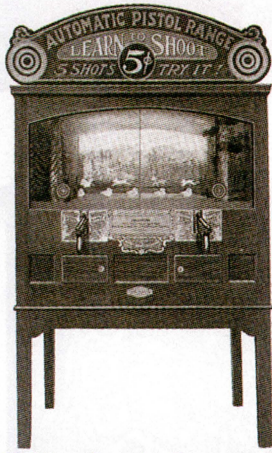
While the inventory lists “Tools, Patterns, dies & etc.” for both the Gem and Acme machines, the diversity of the products listed and that fact that many are from other manufacturers suggests struggles. The corporate address listed on state filings and Chicago city directories indicates that the company was moving around. The 1907 Chicago City Directory, states that R.J. White was president of the White Vending Company and the listing for the company that same year indicates that it was located at 5 to 17 West Madison, manufacturing “vending machines chewing gum, etc.” The listing for the company in 1908 is identical. By 1909, the directory lists the company as now located on the

third floor of 72 South Canal St. and by 1910 there is no listing at all for the company. The final filing with the State of Illinois occurred on February 28, 1911 and White was not listed among the officers.

While it only lasted for a little over four years, the White Vending Company gave us a real “gem.”

(For the creation of this article, I am indebted to Ken Ruben who made available the files of the late Dick Bueschel.)





1929 Version is Larger Than the 1930 Slant Front Model

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Floor model machines from the 1890s through the 1940s are particularly interesting. Wanted: American and European Games, Slots, Mutoscopes, and Working Models

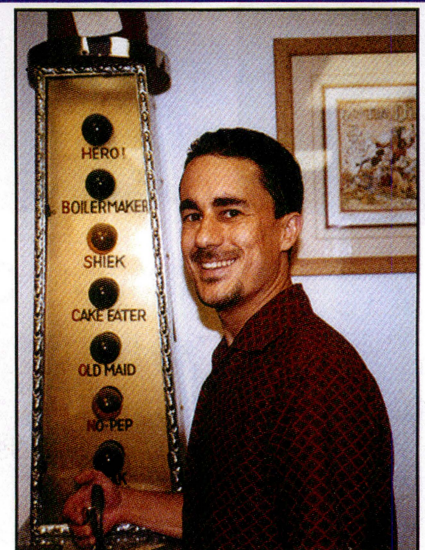
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Do you collect similar coin-ops? Look for me at the Chicagoland show or call me and let's trade stories.

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Chicagoland - Still the Best Game in Town

by Sandy Lechtick

- Deals in the parking lot.
- Deals in the back of trucks.
- Deals in the lobby.
- Deals on forklift gates.
- Deals over dinner.
- Deals in the dead of the night.
- A deal in the Jacuzzi.
- And some say Chicagoland is going down the tubes.
Excuse Me.

Did you see the stuff that Alan Sax, Frank Zygmunt and Jack Freund brought? Not to mention a number of other dealers from all over the U.S.?

Ok. Ok. As usual, some transactions had been concluded before Chicagoland, with pre-arranged delivery pick-up at Pheasant Run. And yes, it's a little depressing when you see a great pre-sold item you'd like to buy moving from one truck to another faster than it takes a check to clear your bank. And yes, I'm constantly reminded that past shows had lots more inventory and it was easier to get great deals - especially before the advent of E-bay.

It was commented that some of the machines were pricey. One dealer I am told brought a number of trade stimulators with prices double, maybe triple the true value of the machines. Needless to say, he went home with all his trade stimulators and I was told that he sold nothing. On the other hand, machines that were priced right sold. Dealers offering reasonable prices made money - many did well.

Since I started actively collecting in 2002, I've been to every Chicagoland - so that makes eleven since my first show. And they're always fun - especially when you come back with two or three machines that you can add to your collection. But meeting up with people you haven't seen in years, dining with those you'd like to get to know better, renewing old acquaintances, comparing notes and hearing more war stories, is simply a kick. As a coin-op collector, nothing compares. And I mean nothing. Where else can one find so many buyers and sellers and junk yard scavengers? For people thinking of selling their wares, I'd highly encourage it. It may be a little hassle renting the truck and driving to St. Charles, but you'll generally do a lot better than the E-bay game - and most transactions are in cash!

A high-end collector friend of mine has for the last three or four years been ranting and raving that going to Chicagoland is a waste of time. He'd complain about not being able to buy anything good and prognosticate, "why should I go there, anyone with outstanding machines can make three or four phone calls and sell it directly to any number of buyers!" While that may be partially true, this fellow did reluctantly go to Chicagoland and guess what, he came away with - a big smile, and three or four great machines that he "stumbled" on. He now admits that he would not have had the opportunity to get these machines if he had not been there in the midst of the action. The saying, "out of sight - out of mind" is so true.

So, at the end of the day, where else can one find the excitement, the camaraderie, the overall exuberance of being surrounded by so many collectors as wacko as you? Or the thrill of discovery at 5:00 am? Where else can one get a fix so overwhelming as Chicagoland?

To paraphrase Ethel Merman who sang "there's no business like show business", there's no Chicagoland like Chicagoland!

Sandy Lechtick, an eclectic collector of coin-op contraptions, specializes in 1930's - 1970's arcade machines, amusement park memorabilia, automata and electrified advertising window displays His website is: www.coinop4trade.com.



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Tales of the Hunt

Hosted by Jack Freund

This “Tale”, sent in by Sal Mazzeo from Cincinnati, starts and ends with the 1946 Bally Draw Bell slot machine.... But the last Bally Draw Bell is not the first Bally Draw Bell. Read on....



My main coin op interest is the slot machine, especially the old mechanical variety. My first experience with them occurred in 1978, when I saw a 25 cent 1946 Bally Draw Bell slot. Still in college, I was dating a girl in Pottsville, Penna., and this console slot machine was sitting on a covered back porch of a neighbor's house. Intrigued, I took a closer look at it and had my girlfriend ask if it was for sale (thinking that they'd sell it

cheaper to a neighbor). Unfortunately, even though it was unrestored and in poor shape, the neighbor thought he owned the holy grail of slot machines. His bargain sale price: \$1000. Not surprisingly, I passed on that offer, as I was a poor college student with minimal cash. However, the interest had been created, so the seed was planted in my mind of owning one someday.

Fast forward four years. I'd moved to Cincinnati for a job with Procter & Gamble, met a different girl, and got married. But I still had the bug for buying an old slot machine. Other coin ops also caught my interest, but not like old slot machines did. What could be cooler than to have one in your basement gameroom? After trolling through local antique shops, I found one establishment specializing in antique coin ops. He didn't have any affordable slots in his inventory, but that changed a few months later. He obtained a cache of slot machines that recently escaped the local police in Tennessee. A bar in that southern state had been running Mills Hightops to supplement their liquor income, but the 'heat' became too much for the owner. So the 6-8 machines made their way to Cincinnati, and one of them, a 10 cent Mills Hightop, ultimately ended up in my house. It took some haggling with the shop owner to finalize the deal. We settled on a final amount by flip-

ping a coin to split the last \$100 difference in price (I lost the flip, but didn't lose sleep over it). It was painted a garish purple, but I restored it to a more original red color. I later traded it for other coin ops machines, as I built my collection.

Since then, I've had fun buying other slots, as well as a few other coin ops, as you can see from the photos. The Jennings Peacock came from a container load of English slots brought back to the US. It plays the old large English Penny. I only wish I'd had a lot more money to buy



more of those US machines set on English coins when they were available, and so affordable, during the mid-1980's!

One of the more unusual purchases was my Jennings Little Duke. I'd wanted one of those slots for a while, and was constantly scanning the auction papers, looking for one. Well, lo and behold, I saw one that was coming up for auction in Howell, Michigan in November, 1984. The thought of driving to Michigan was



not particularly appealing to me, especially if I wasn't the successful bidder. So I called the auctioneer, and asked him if I could bid by phone. (I thought what the heck, all he could say was no). To my surprise and delight, he agreed. I set a time to make the call, made my bids, and my \$800 took the Little Duke! Then came the hard part – how to collect the machine? Luckily,



the auctioneer had to make a trip to the southern US a week later, and passed by Cincinnati. So I avoided the long trip during the whole deal.

Another memorable slot purchase was my Mills Bonus Hightop. News of this machine came from a friend, who knew a retired police detective. The detective had been on a gambling bust, and it turns out he ended up with more than just an arrest. He also picked up a set of three matching Mills Bonus Hightops – 5, 10 and 25 cent, which ended up in his basement. (No doubt just for safekeeping). After some negotiations, a friend and I bought the machines. I sold the 25 cent machine and kept the 5 cent slot. I was glad the slots didn't get destroyed - the trash heap's loss was my gain.

One of my last acquisitions was a Bally Draw Bell console slot. Even though I didn't get that machine back in the 1970's, I was able to buy an unrestored one at Chicagoland in the mid-1990's. I still have to restore it, but my first slot 'addiction' finally got its 'fix' years later! Most of my slots are the old mechanical type, but the consoles are fun, too.

Sal Mazzeo

Editor's note...

I guess what goes around, comes around!

In the last issue I was able to tell you in advance that we would have Sal Mazzeo's "Tale" to enjoy because I had the luxury of having it when that issue went to the printer. Sadly I can't divulge who's tale will be next because I don't have a "next" tale. Please send me your Tale If you don't, "Tales of The Hunt" will come to an end. Send to Jack Freund, P.O. Box 4, Springfield WI. 53176 or e-mail it to jbgum@msn.com and don't forget to

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STEREO Sunday, April 6, 2008 **HITS**

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Admission: \$7.00

STEREO Friday, April 4, 2008 **HITS**

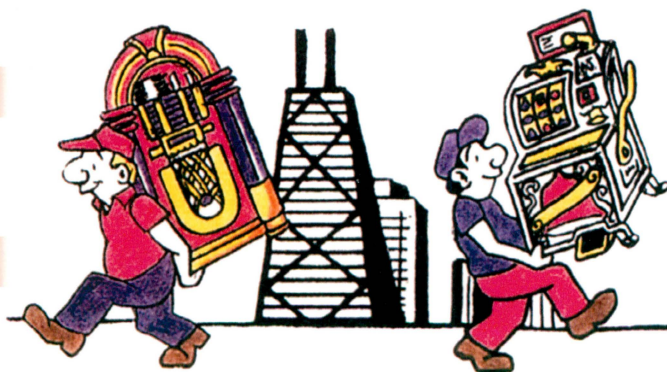
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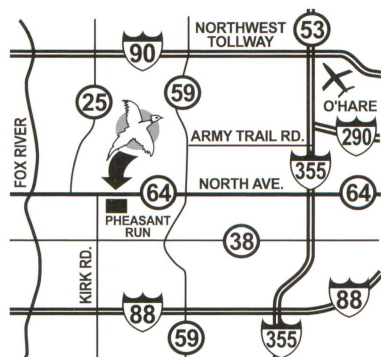
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WORLDWIDE CROWDS FLOCK TO SEMI-ANNUAL CHICAGOLAND ANTIQUE ADVERTISING SLOT MACHINE SHOW

by Jack Kelly

Once again, foreign buyers rubbed elbows with American collectors attending the huge semi-annual Chicagoland Antique Advertising, Slot Machine and Juke Box Show in St. Charles, Ill., Nov. 10, 11 and 12.

But as one dealer noted, the foreigners definitely had the advantage.

John Papa, who is noted for selling high-end coin operated devices, said, "With the American dollar so weak right now against the euro, they're basically paying half price for everything. He added, "Overseas buyers were very eager to buy, and for the first time the Canadians came in with an exchange advantage. Forever it's been the other way around. Suddenly they're in the driver's seat."

Papa, from Mayfield, N.Y. said the show started with a bang as he quickly sold a "rare 1930s-40s floor model console coin operated mid-gt auto racing game made by Pace," a company also known for making slot machines and a similar horse race game. The new owner could race the cars at home, after forking over \$12,500.

Others stopped at Papa's booth to admire, and play, an original unrestored 24-selection 1946 Packard Manhattan juke box for \$2,900.

One overseas buyer, Ben F. Franse of Bennies Fifties, who traveled from the Netherlands, is a 30-year show veteran. The buyer filled a 40-foot ship container with items purchased at the show. The dealer said he "specializes in juke boxes" but also was buying pinball machines, Coke ma-

chines and "all kinds of Americana" for his shop and showroom. When the show ended, the goodies were shipped home, a trip estimated to take at least three weeks.

Weak dollar or not, American buyers also were out in force and made their presence known on the trading floor.

Dealer B.J. Pawlaczek of AuGres, Mich., who specializes in high-ticket restored rare vintage boat motors, was all smiles when a Florida buyer walked into his booth and bought his entire display!

"Michael Dezer of Classic Motors in Miami flew to St. Charles in his private jet," said Pawlaczek. "He said he would buy everything if I would deliver it to Florida -- and I told him it would be my honor."

The deal included 16 restored motors and stands, a custom boat coffee table, advertising pieces and various other nautical items.

Although soldout, Pawlaczek stayed for the entire three days, saying he "wanted to support the show promoters."

Could it get any better? Lightning struck twice as Pawlaczek visited a nearby local Illinois collector and purchased an "extremely rare Evinrude half-horse motorbike, complete with original paint, that looked almost like new." He brought the bike back to the Chicagoland show saying, "it's the only one I've ever seen complete and it's sure catching lot of looks."

What could be more American than an Indian? Well, shoppers could take home a life-size hand

carved wooden Indian, complete with slot machine installed in the torso, offered by Bob Delong of Johnsonburg, Pa. The Indian was priced at \$6,995, with other figures such as a knight in armor and an Al Capone look-alike available at the same spot.

Those looking for a smaller coin op gambling machine had their choice of a big group of trade stimulators at the booth of Al Louck of Oquawka, Ill. The dealer was "tuning up" a couple of the devices before the show, saying with a smile, "there was a time in my life that I would rather fix these than eat." Buyers had a choice of several 1930s models priced from \$350 to \$2,000.

"I brought two machines and sold them quickly" said John Miller, who traveled to St. Charles from Memphis, Tenn., with another dealer. He said his off-beat restored Burtmier Pony two-reel payout slot machine found a new home for \$4,200 and cast aluminum Royal Reels card game coin-operated trade stimulator brought \$1,000. The seller-turned-buyer said he was "off to spend the money on something to take home from the show."

Cigar smokers stopped to check out two items offered by Mike Rector of Alhambra, Calif. There was a choice of two nickel-plated clockwork-mechanism cast iron cigar tip cutters priced at \$1,300 and \$1,500. Rector said he has been collecting for 15 years and was looking for "whatever I can get onto an airplane" to take home from the Chicagoland Show.

Those who actually wanted a smoke and “had a pocket full of money” stopped to check out the vintage stogies presented by Randy Osentoski, Toledo, Ohio. Smokers could choose from a box of Paragas, Havana or Romeo and Juliet cigars at \$1,500 a box or \$50 per cigar. The dealer said he found a supply of the vintage smokes in a “dilapidated hardware store with the roof caved in.” Does he smoke? He said with a chuckle, “No I don’t but I think they’re wonderful.”

Another Ohio dealer, Paul Voska of Ferrysburg, attracted marble collectors with his Akro Agates marble set, complete with original box. The 54-marble set was said to be “mostly oxblood” and included the carry pouch and a price tag of \$5,000.

Pool player traffic stopped at the booth of Todd Dowdedito of Ortonville, Mich., where restored vintage slate bottom tables were featured. Two different models, circa 1880s-1900s, could be set up at home for \$14,000 and \$15,000. The dealer said he “enjoyed the show” and added that he had “about 60 more tables at his warehouse north of Detroit.”

Popcorn and Coca-Cola go together and they were both featured

in coin-operated machines brought to the Chicagoland Show by Steve Mumma of West Des Moines, Iowa. An all original 5-foot-tall Vendo 44 Coke machine could cool soda at your place for \$4,495, while a 6-foot-tall late 1930s restored Pop-O-Matic could make a fresh batch of popcorn for \$5,000.

Collecting gumball and peanut machines is a family affair for Randy Razzoog, wife Sue, and daughter, 10-year-old Hayley who traveled from Grand Rapids, Mich., to buy and sell. They offered a 22-inch-tall Peerless penny-drop gumball machine combining gambling and vending action for \$1,695 and a 1920s Grandbois gumball machine made in Kalamazoo for \$295.

Twenty-eight-year show veterans Jim and Jan Pursell of Herrin, Ill., also showed gumball and peanut machines. A 1920s Supreme with original finish was priced at \$400 while a Superior Confection could be used at home for \$325.

Lights, sound and action were apparent at the booth of Mike Nogle of Great American Pinball, West Chicago, Ill. The three-year show dealer offered “hands-on-action” with a display of pinball machines priced from \$1500 to \$4500. What

machine was the most popular? Nogel said, “the brand new Spider-man 2007 tops the list.”

You could check your weight for just one penny with a stop at the floor model scale display presented by Bill and Jan Berning, of Genoa, Ill. Six vintage models were on display at the show priced from \$300 to \$900.

Among the thousands of shoppers that filled the isles, Kelly McIntosh and Alan McDougall traveled from Keyport, N.J.—with a mission. They were seeking -- and found -- an outside housing or skin for their '39 Coke vending machine. The pair said the “14-hour drive was well worth it” and added they were glad they paid the \$50 per person entry fee for early buying on Friday, Nov. 9. Regular admission was \$7 per person on Saturday and Sunday.

The spring show will once again be held April 4, 5 and 6 at Pheasant Run Resort 35 miles west of Chicago.

Dealers can get information from co-promoter Bob Traynoff at 1-847-244-9263. Show information is available from co-promoter Kevin Greco at 1-815-353-1593, or www.chicagolandshow.com.



Promotion of the Chicagoland Show is a family affair. From left are Penny and Bob Trainoff, 10-year old son Samuel and the newest member, 7-year old-Nicholas peeking over the top along side dad and mom, Kevin and Dawn Greco. Both families were admiring a Chicago Coin Band Box replica shown by Brad Frank, Chatsworth, Ca.



Sue Razzoog and ten year old daughter Hayley check out the hand carved Indian slot machine priced \$6,995 at the Chicagoland Show.



An oddball 1930s 2-reel slot machine changed hands quickly for \$4,200 at the November show.



Ben F. Franse (right) traveled to the show from the Netherlands to check out coin op machines including this group of pinball machines offered by Mike Nogle of Great American Pinball, West Chicago, Ill.



Kelly McIntosh and Alan McDougall traveled to the show from Keyport, N.J.



Three year old Adam Sheedy steps on a coin operated scale offered at the November show.



"Tuning up" a coin operated trade stimulator was part of the pre-show tasks performed by Al Louck of Oquawka, Ill.



A combination penny drop gambling machine, priced \$1,695, also vends a gum-ball – all for one cent!

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WANTED: Coin-Op Telescope or Binoculars. Old, working or not. Contact: Lester Cohn at (818) 883-7374.

I have some excellent vending machines and trade stimulators for sale. Free delivery to the Spring Chicagoland Show. E-mail: jbgum@msn.com or Phone (262) 203-0036.

FOR SALE: Genco Fortune Teller Parts _ Vacuum formed plastic canopies, translucent as original complete with graphics \$395. Set of 5 red marbleized pre-drilled balls \$95. Set of 5 machined brass finials, (tapered and threaded) \$95. Rubber hand for pedestal model \$90. Complete set of decals for front glass (pedestal or horoscope models) \$35 per set. Horoscope model indicator glass (silk screened and translucent as original) is \$165. "NEW" small silk screened glass panel \$35 (sits in front of crystal ball) on horoscope floor models only. Copies of Instruction/Operating manuals are \$10 each. Other parts are also available. Also clear canopy with red trim (as original) for the Williams Ten Strike Bowler \$345. Contact Paul or Patty at (905) 732-4448 or mecmusic@sympatico.ca.

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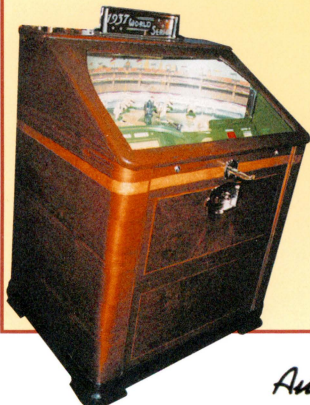
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